



The Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program



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The Emergency Food and Shelter (EFS) Program was created by Congress in 1983 to help meet the needs of hungry and homeless people throughout the United States and its territories by allocating funds for the provision of food and shelter. To accomplish this, the program supplements the work of local agencies already providing such help at the community level. This add-on approach allows the program to keep a low administrative overhead of less than 3% of the total allocation. During its first 13 years of operation, the program disbursed over \$1.4 billion to over 10,500 non-profit and local government agencies in more than 2,500 jurisdictions.

The EFS Program is governed by a National Board composed of representatives of the American Red Cross, Catholic Charities, USA, Council of Jewish Federations, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, the Salvation Army, and the United Way of America. The Board is chaired by a representative of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the United Way of America serves as the program's secretariat. Locally, the program is a model of public-private cooperation. The National Board uses a formula involving population, poverty and unemployment data to determine the eligibility of a civil jurisdiction. Each jurisdiction funded by the program must constitute a local board. The board must be composed of the same organizations as those on the National Board, with a local government official replacing a FEMA representative. Since 1993, local boards are required to include a homeless or formerly homeless person as a member.

For additional information, contact the National Board staff at (703) 706-9660.